

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 20, 2000 (BOS Mtg. 12/5/00)

TO: York County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Daniel M. Stuck, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Senior Center of York

Background

As the Board is aware, the County operates the Senior Center of York. The Center is a function of the Community Services Department and was established in 1991. The first location was a donated storefront in the Patriot Square Shopping Center. In 1993, the County rented three storefront units at Washington Square Shopping Center. The conjoined units are located on the side wing of the shopping center and total 3,100 square feet. The Peninsula Agency on Aging (PAA) has been an excellent supporter of the Center and pays the utilities on the rented space.

Staffing for the Center is minimal - the County provides a full-time staff person to support the Center and work-as-required receptionists. Whenever possible the County uses the federal "Older Workers Training Program" to fund the receptionist positions. PAA provides a part-time coordinator to oversee the meals program. A very hard working board appointed by the Board of Supervisors, provides community leadership, attracts extensive additional volunteers, and defines the programming at the Center and conducts many of the activities. It is this partnership between the County and the citizens of York that has made the Senior Center an extremely successful undertaking.

Activities are held at the Center each weekday. Customarily there are several going simultaneously. The level of participation has increased dramatically and sign-in sheets indicate that there are in excess of 14,000 visits to the Center annually. It is also quite likely that this figure is understated, since many visitors fail to sign the "guest book". In short, this Center is popular, extremely busy and very overcrowded.

■ Expansion Search

Planning for a new Senior Center building is included in the County's capitol program. During the FY2000 budget preparations, the Board of Supervisors engaged in considerable discussion regarding the over-crowded conditions and the need for additional space. At that time the Board directed staff to make every effort to identify a suitable relocation plan on a more expedient basis. The Board advised that this should take the form of either:

- a. expanded rental space or
- b. the construction of a Center, built-to-suit and leased-back, with the County taking ownership at the end of a payment plan spread over a 20 year period.

During the past year and a half the County's Community Services Director has exhaustively explored all possible avenues for accomplishing this. In addition to cost-effectiveness, the parameters that defined reasonable options include:

- **Location**

Distance and proximity to the residential concentration of senior patrons is an extremely important consideration in siting a Senior Center. York's demographics indicate that the greater Grafton area is the most appropriate area of the County. (See demographics chart).

- **Size**

The current facility contains 3,100 square feet and certainly much more space is desirable. However, in the search effort, 10,000 square feet was considered the maximum – any greater size would become too “institutionalized” and impersonal. Rather than exceeding that size, a second facility located elsewhere in the County would be preferable.

- **Co-location**

Multi-destination sites are desirable in locating Senior Centers. The availability of grocery stores, pharmacies and other services that allow multiple tasks to be accomplished with a single trip are optimum. Visibility and security are important considerations. At a minimum, there should be no sense of isolation or remoteness for a facility of this kind.

The majority of the sites located with proximity to the concentrated senior population were extremely expensive, commercially zoned or included extensive wetlands. Three potentially viable alternatives were identified:

1. **Co-location with the Caritas facility.**

The York County Business Association (YCBA) expressed interest in selling the County portions of their property adjacent to the Caritas building on York-Hampton Highway. Staff met with a delegation from that organization in August 2000 and discussed this option at some length. The YCBA/Caritas was established with the good of both the association and the community in mind. The Caritas building, however, has outstanding indebtedness. The representatives were concerned that proceeds from the sale of portions of the property would be needed to reduce that debt. That would not be consistent with the County's conceptual plan for financing construction of the Senior Center. It was left that the YCBA/Caritas contingent would discuss this with the full board and if interested, would be in contact. YCBA/Caritas has not pursued this further. However, it should be noted that this site is rather remote and there are no adjacent services of any kind. When the concept was presented to the Senior Center board, the members raised concerns about the general isolation of the area and questioned the suitability of the location.

2. **Build to Suit – Villa Development LLC**

Representatives of Villa Development LLC have introduced a conceptual proposal to construct a Senior Center according to the County's desired specifications on property located near the intersection of Rt. 17 and Burt's Road. This appears to be a serious proposal that might have benefits to the County. It requires considerable study and would be several years into the future before it could be implemented. Staff will continue these discussions.

3. Rental of retail space at Washington Square Shopping Center.

The owners and management company of Washington Square have identified additional space and offered that to the County. This option is presently available and is strongly recommended by staff. At the October 11 meeting, the Board of the Senior Center considered options and formally voted to ask the County to agree to lease the new space at Washington Square.

■ Details Regarding Washington Square Alternative

Harvey Lindsay Commercial Real Estate, agents for the owners of Washington Square Shopping Center, have offered the County three adjacent storefront units containing approximately six thousand three hundred and sixty-seven (6,367) square feet of gross floor area. This is slightly more than double the current operating space. Further, it allows the Center to remain in familiar and well-liked surroundings at Washington Square.

Staff has been in serious negotiations with the agents for several weeks. The market rate for the property is \$12.50 per square foot with an additional Common Area Maintenance (C.A.M.) of \$1.33 per square foot. Management has agreed to a significant reduction – a gross rent of \$10.33 initially and escalating to only \$11.00 per square foot in 2004 with no further increases through 2006.

The size is quite satisfactory and will contain operations for well into the future. Some renovations of the space will be necessary in order to conjoin the storefronts and make adjustments to the interiors to make appropriate program spaces. Improvements have been made in two of the units to accommodate prior tenants. Portions of those improvements can be retained and used in the Senior Center. Modifications will be necessary to allow, at a minimum, the following functions:

- **Nutrition and Meals site.** It should be noted that food for the breakfast and lunch programs are delivered to and not prepared in the current Center. This should not change. The kitchen area will need refrigerator, counter and hygienic sink capacity. Microwaves only are used for warming food and no stove is proposed. As much equipment as possible would be moved from the existing site to the new location.
- **Large and small group activities.** An open space for physical activities such as “Body Recall” and line dancing is needed. As well, partitioning of smaller areas is needed to permit crafts, instructional and socialization activities.
- **Computer Lab.** The Senior Computer Club is much in demand. It has between 150 – 200 participants monthly and enjoys excellent support from volunteer trainers. There would be adequate space in the new facility to have a significantly enhanced Computer Lab utilizing both County purchased and donated computers.
- **Clinic.** Currently a variety of health screening and monitoring activities take place at the Senior Center through local hospitals and health care providers. The new facility could accommodate a clinic area that would allow privacy that does not presently exist.

The proposed renovations primarily involve structural modifications and flooring coverings. When the County established the present facility, the community was extremely involved in painting and decorating. This had benefits far beyond cost-containment measures – it fostered a sense of community

involvement and ownership that persists today. If the Board authorizes this lease, staff will again encourage this kind of volunteer involvement.

The Board approved funds in the carryover for the expansion of the Center. These are available in the current budget and are adequate to cover all costs associated with the move. Although there would be no increase this fiscal year, approval of this lease creates an on-going budget obligation. Beginning in FY2002, an annual increase of approximately \$50,000 over the current level of Senior Center facilities funding will be required.

Recommendation

The Senior Center has been an extremely successful undertaking participation in excess of 14,000 visits annually. It is a highly collaborative undertaking with good support from Peninsula Agency on Aging and exceptional involvement by the community. The current space is inadequate and demands will only increase as York's senior population continues to grow. The lease proposal for the new space at Washington Square Shopping Center offers a good opportunity to meet this need and a beneficial rental rate has been successfully negotiated. I recommend adoption of Resolution R00-200 to authorize the execution of a lease agreement to relocate and expand the Senior Center of York.

Smith/4111

Attachments:

- Participation Chart
- Population Map
- Lease Agreement
- Proposed Resolution R00-200